

To: NSLP Sponsors

From: Mary Jo Marshall, CNP Coordinator

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Subject: Menu Planning Methods Requirements

In order to provide the best meals possible and provide the nutrients required to sustain optimum health and growth of children, the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) of the USDA issued regulations which took effect on July 1, 1996, called the School Meals Initiative (SMI) for Healthy Children. These regulations have been in effect for 12 years.

Since this time, the State Agency has provided numerous workshops including most recently "Preview the Review." These workshops have addressed approved menu planning methods, production records, standardized recipes, nutrient labeling and other topics to assist sponsors in learning regulations that need to be followed to be in compliance with USDA regulation.

When the SMI first took effect we stated that if sponsors were "working towards" meeting requirements you would be in compliance. SMI is no longer a new initiative and it is our expectation that sponsors be in compliance with the regulations.

In the past, SDE has required each sponsor to submit menus with their annual renewals. This requirement will be in effect again for the 2008-09 school year and will be due with your renewal packet.

The State Agency reviewers have conducted CRE and SMI reviews in the past few years and we have had several instances where a school district supervisor has indicated on their Site applications on CNP2000 that they follow a particular menu planning system when in fact, they do not follow all of the requirements for that system.

This year the State Agency was provided with technical assistance from USDA's Federal Team of SMI reviewers. One of the areas of discussion at this technical assistance was the State Agency's ability to assess fiscal action to sponsors who are not complying with the regulations of the SMI.

The following examples are a few instances where fiscal action could occur for Food Based menu planning:

1. Portion sizes planned and served do not meet the minimum requirements.
2. Processed entrees served are being counted as the meat/meat alternate but do not have a CN label.
3. Standardized recipes are not in place or are not followed.

The following examples are a few instances where fiscal action could occur for Nutrient Standard menu planning (NSMP):

1. Menus are not entered into the computer for all grade levels.
2. Menus and food products entered are not current and do not represent meals served.
3. Food products entered into the analysis software do not match the foods actually served.
4. Standardized recipes are not in place or are not followed.

All meals claimed for reimbursement must follow one of the approved menu planning systems described below.

Nutrient Standard Menu Planning (NSMP)

Nutrient Standard Menu Planning (NSMP) is a nutrient-based menu planning approach that uses USDA-approved computer software to analyze the specific nutrient content of menus in order to plan menus. **Reimbursable meals are based on planned menus meeting the required age/grade-appropriate nutrient standards, averaged over a school week.**

This approach is designed to give menu planners flexibility in planning menus that meet the nutrient standards. The analysis must be periodically updated to reflect any changes in the menu, products purchased, or student selection patterns. If a sponsor takes the responsibility for planning and analyzing its own menus using a computer, it is said to be using NSMP.

If your district has chosen NSMP as your menu planning system, you **must** have all age/grade groups analyzed for all meals served under that system. If you are not currently meeting this requirement for NSMP, you must switch to one of the food based menu planning systems or contract with an outside source to conduct the nutrient analysis under the Assisted menu planning system described below.

Assisted Nutrient Standard Menu Planning (ANSMP)

Assisted Nutrient Standard Menu Planning (ANSMP) is a variation of Nutrient Standard Menu Planning. It is for sponsors that lack the technical resources to

conduct nutrient analysis themselves but want to use a nutrient-based menu planning approach. Instead, sponsors use an outside source such as a consultant, another SFA, or the State Agency, to plan and analyze menus that are based on local needs and preferences.

This approach requires contracting with an outside source to provide the service. The outside source must provide the sponsor with recipes, product specifications, and other documentation to support the menu analysis. The menus and analyses must be periodically updated to reflect any changes in the menu, food products, or student selection patterns.

Enhanced Food Based Menu Planning (EFBMP)

Enhanced Food Based provides a menu plan that is very similar to the Traditional Food Based. It is an enhancement to the Traditional Food Based. The food components are the same, but some quantities are increased. **Nutrient Standards must be met**, but the SFA is not required to conduct a nutrition analysis on the menus. The State agency will conduct a nutrient analysis at the time of the review.

Traditional Food Based Menu Planning (TFBMP)

Traditional Food Based is the name for the meal pattern used before the regulations took effect in July 1996. Traditional Food Based may continue to be used, with State permission, if the person responsible for menus presents convincing reasons that the menus meet the Nutrient Standards. The Traditional Food Based Menus are **not required** to meet the extra servings of grains/breads and vegetables required under the Enhanced Food Based System.

Any Reasonable Approach

A fifth menu planning option has been approved. Contact the State Agency for further guidance.

Making the Menu Planning Choice

The choice of which menu planning system to use will depend upon many things, such as whether or not you have or can purchase an adequate computer, your level of computer interest and skills, and the time available to input data and do the analysis. If you do not plan to use a computer, consider the Enhanced Food Based Menu Planning system.

The Nutrient Standards must be met regardless of the system chosen.

Please consult chapter 13 of the Idaho School Food Service manual for more information on the menu planning options available to you.

After reading this memo and Chapter 13, if you have further questions please feel free to contact the child nutrition program staff at SDE.